

Governor Carney joins DNREC Secretary Garvin to present DNREC Awards in State Fair ceremony

HARRINGTON – Today at the Delaware State Fair, Governor John Carney and DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin honored two dozen Delawareans and groups of all ages for their environmental leadership, innovation, and dedication.

“This afternoon, we recognized a broad cross section of Delawareans who contribute to the conservation of our natural resources and the stewardship of our environment,” said Secretary Garvin. “We congratulate these volunteers, organizers, photographers, and anglers – conservationists and environmentalists all – for their work that brought us here today, and we look forward to their future contributions.”

Honorees were seven Young Environmentalists of the Year, eight individuals and four groups recognized as Volunteers of the Year, three Youth Fishing Tournament winners, winners of this year’s Hunting and Fishing Photo Contests, and four winners of the new Delaware Watersheds Photo Contest, plus Best in Show.

“These awards underscore how every Delawarean can have an impact in protecting and conserving our natural resources, while also raising awareness for environmental stewardship,” Governor Carney said. “I’m also inspired by the award winners’ dedication to making our state a better place to live through their time and talents, and proud to recognize them for their environmental leadership and innovation.”

The complete list of the 2019 DNREC Awards recipients:

DNREC's Young Environmentalists of the Year

Elementary School



Young Environmentalists Conner Bradley and Lily Gatti are congratulated by Governor Carney, Lieutenant Governor Bethany Hall-Long, and DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin.

As second graders at Dover's W. Reily Brown Elementary School, **Conner Bradley** and **Lily Gatti**, both 8 years old, are leaders on their school's Eco-Team. They share a passion for our natural environment and serve as peer educators for their classmates. Conner has also taken on independent research

projects, such as studying strawberry propagation and soil health. Lily is a strong advocate for composting and keeping our environment trash-free, in both her school and community. In May, when the U.S. Department of Education recognized the Caesar Rodney School District with a Green Ribbon School award, Conner and Lily both spoke about their environmental concerns and commitments before a large audience at their school that included Governor Carney, state legislators, school officials, and media who attended.

Middle School

Jade Carter, 13, an 8th grader at Sussex Academy in Georgetown, founded the first middle school chapter of the Surfrider Foundation in the state. The Surfrider organization is dedicated to protecting and enjoying the oceans, waves, and beaches through volunteer activities including regular beach cleanups. An avid volunteer, she is currently planning fundraisers and cleanups for the chapter. Jade has also channeled her passion for volunteerism and environmental projects into starting a recycling program at her school, including recycling bins specially decorated to draw attention to the importance of recycling.

High School (tie)

A new graduate of Newark Charter School with plans to attend the University of Delaware for environmental studies, **Sabin Lowe**, 19, of Newark, has devoted 5-10 hours a week for the past two years to projects that improve Delaware's environment. Sabin's work includes lobbying and even writing legislation that includes a proposed ban on use of plastic straws, for which he is working to gain sponsorship in the Delaware General Assembly. Sabin advocates for reducing the use of straws and other plastics in restaurants, and has so far persuaded 15 restaurants to adopt a straw-on-request policy, reducing the City of Newark's straw usage by an estimated 20,000 straws a day.

Cole Palmer, 17, of Greenwood, has been an active volunteer stream monitor for six years with the Delaware Nature Society's Stream Watch, performing monthly testing of five streams in the Mispillion Watershed, and recording more than 18,000 observations and analyses. Cole has also organized a number of community cleanups, including a DelDOT Adopt-a-Highway cleanup that collected more than 2,100 pounds of trash. This past year, he has leveraged his 103 volunteer hours into nearly 400 hours of community service with the help of friends and family. A past Young Environmentalist honoree in partnership with his sister Samantha, Cole is a member of Eagle Scout Troop 116 in Milford and a junior at Delaware State University's Early College High School, working towards a degree in natural resources for fisheries management.

Special Recognition

At ages 6 and 8 and in the first and second grade respectively, sisters **Caroline and Isabella Nacchia** of Frankford are already budding entomologists. Caroline is passionate about Monarch butterfly conservation, working tirelessly each summer since she was three to raise Monarchs from caterpillars to chrysalis to butterflies. Last summer, she raised about 350 butterflies. Butterflies often come to her in the garden and perch on her finger, for which her friends have dubbed her "the Butterfly Whisperer." As a beekeeper, Isabella understands the importance of bees, is eager to help them, and inspires her peers to do the same. She can identify larva, worker bees (females) and drones (males), and honey, nectar and queen cups, and is comfortable handling the inhabitants of her hives.

The Young Environmentalist of the Year Awards are presented annually to Delaware students who have worked to protect, restore, or enhance our state's natural resources. For more information, contact Joanna Wilson, DNREC Public Affairs, 302-739-9902, or joanna.wilson@delaware.gov.

DNREC's Outstanding Volunteers of the Year

Youth

Joshua Cogliano has been a constant participant for several years in Brandywine Zoo educational programs, camps, volunteer opportunities, and now, at 17, internships. An early high school graduate who happens to be on the Autism spectrum, Joshua makes sure he is involved at every possible point in the zoo's public initiatives. The zoo is honored to have been a part of Joshua's childhood (camp), teenage service years (volunteering), and the beginning of his career (internship).

Administration & Coordination

Ann Hilaman volunteers in the Auburn Valley State Park office on a regular basis. After offering to help out because there was no administrative assistant, Ann does the work of a paid staff member, while also serving as a docent in the 1897 Marshall Mansion.

Conservation Group

The **Judge Morris Environmental Stewardship group**, led by Terri Tipping, meets every Thursday to pull and eradicate invasive plants within the Judge Morris area at White Clay Creek State Park, and invites other park users to join them. They started working initially on the park trail and have expanded into the interior forest and out into the field buffers. The group is dedicated, open to learning about newly-observed invasives and techniques for removing them, and has members who have applied for pesticide application certification.

Education Group

Veteran anglers and fishing instructors **Ed O'Donnell** and **Sam Palermo** volunteer to lead and support every fishing program held in White Clay Creek State Park, including fly fishing

classes, Children with Challenges fishing, staff training, and fishing programs with campers and visitors.

Environmental Conservation

As a volunteer at White Clay Creek State Park, **Greg Wein** goes above and beyond, with his willingness and creative energy to do what it takes to accomplish trail projects, as well as his critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Environmental Education

Diane Twining volunteers 45-50 hours a week in Trap Pond State Park's main office, where she is extremely well-informed and helpful with park programs. Diane is dedicated to the educational value of Trap Pond, and genuinely loves the park and its natural resources, embodying all the best qualities of park staff.

Historical Conservation

Valley State Park volunteer **Robert "Bob" Koury** maintains the very popular miniature steam railroad, keeping it operational. Bob created and partially financed a train maintenance shed with entry track, making volunteer work easier and safer. He removed and replaced the back curve of the track, installed drains and catch basins, inspected, replaced and/or rebuilt all trucks under all rolling stock, installed drains and boards along the track, and repaired most of the track switches. He donated a cement mixer and creatively modified it to shift and wash track ballast. Bob also volunteers for all Steamin' Days events. His leadership has contributed to the continual running of the miniature railroad, something DNREC's Delaware state parks could not afford to do independently. Over the past two years, Bob has donated 800 volunteer hours, and this year is on track for another 400. His commitment has preserved the legacy of the Marshall family's miniature railroad for the enjoyment of families for years to come.

Historical Education

Marc Krisch has been an active volunteer with Fort Delaware State Park for several years. Marc gives his time to come in and help out not just on weekends, but is also willing to take vacation from his work to participate in trainings. In addition, he has invested a lot of his own time and money to help ensure he makes an excellent impression as a period-costumed historical interpreter at Fort Delaware.

Outdoor Recreation

After becoming Bellevue State Park's disc golf course pro in 2017, **Kevin Nemeth** spearheaded the creation of a sustainable plan to redevelop the course, including creating more than 10 new holes and eliminating all holes located in the central meadow of the Bellevue Track. Kevin contributed hundreds of volunteer hours to complete the project, recruit other volunteers, and coordinate with both disc golfers and Park staff to ensure that the project was completed to the satisfaction of the Division of Parks & Recreation and course users. As a result of his efforts, Bellevue's disc golf course has seen its highest number of visitors in many years, and has hosted one large tournament, as well as new weekly doubles events. In addition, Kevin's work demonstrated responsible and proactive environmental stewardship through the creation of a much larger and contiguous Bellevue Track meadow habitat.

Research

Daniel Lawson volunteered nearly 60 hours to assist Division of Fish & Wildlife staff with waterfowl trapping, banding, and data collection. The data are used in coordination with the Atlantic Flyway Council and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to set waterfowl season hunting regulations. Without Daniel's help, the Division's banding efforts would have been greatly reduced.

Research Group

Conservationists **Charles and Kathy Shattuck** have provided gourds and poles for the purple martin nesting population at Bellevue State Park. Charles checks the status of the eggs and hatchlings on a weekly basis during breeding season, gives interpretive programs about purple martins for visitors, coordinates with the volunteer bird walk leader, and works with a bird bander to place metal bands on new purple martins, to track the birds returning to Bellevue to breed. Their efforts have helped increase the park's population of this threatened species from less than a dozen to more than 100 birds in the past few years.

Friends Group

The **Friends of Killens Pond** provide scholarship money for Killens Summer Camp programs, allowing children who would otherwise not be able to afford it the opportunity to attend summer camps. They also maintain all of the trails within the park, keeping them beautiful for visitors. This past year, the group purchased volunteer insurance to cover all state parks volunteers, providing protection to all of our interns, friends group members, and individual long and short-term volunteers within the parks.

DNREC offers a wide range of year-round volunteer opportunities for all ages. To learn about how you or your group can volunteer, visit dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/volunteer-with-dnrec/.

Youth Fishing Tournament

First place

For an amazing third year in a row, **Elise Britton**, 15, of Middletown, was the overall statewide winner, as well as the New Castle County winner at Lums Pond, with a total weight of 24.17 pounds that included a 9.6-pound carp, the largest fish

caught in this year's tournament on June 1.

Second place

At the Akridge Scout Reservation pond, **Kirra Noble**, 9, of Frederica, was the Kent County winner and second place statewide, for catching a total of 8.02 pounds of fish.

Third place

Luke Hitchens, 12, of Dagsboro, was Sussex County winner for two years in a row, and third statewide, with a total of 5.39 pounds of fish caught in Ingrams Pond near Millsboro.

Held annually on the first Saturday in June, the Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police Youth Fishing Tournament was established in 1986 to introduce young people to the sport of fishing and to teach the catch-and-release approach to conservation.

Hunting and Fishing Photo Contests

Harry Hoch Jr. of Greenwood, won the 2018/19 Delaware Hunting Photo Contest for his submission of "Hunting Memories," featuring his father, Dr. Harry L. Hoch and friend Bill Cole, after a successful hunt near Harrington. His photo will appear on the cover of the 2019/2020 Delaware Hunting & Trapping guide.

Israel Mora of Wilmington won the 2018 Delaware Fishing Photo Contest for his photo titled "The Fish of the 10,000 Casts," featuring Mora's son Bryan holding his tiger musky catch from Brandywine River. His photo is featured on the cover of the 2019 Delaware Fishing Guide.

For information on the Division of Fish & Wildlife's upcoming 2019/20 contests, click [Fish & Wildlife photo contest](#).

Delaware Watersheds Photo Contest

Natural Landscapes of Delaware

First place: **Bernard Dennis** of Millsboro, "Beautiful Countryside off Wilkins Road in Lincoln"

Second place: **Zachary Williams** of Odenton, Md., "Duck Stand in Bombay Hook Refuge"

Third place: **Joe Hengel** of Milton, "Gordons Pond Trail at Cape Henlopen State Park"

Natural Waterscapes of Delaware

First place: **Ryan Shlan** of Magnolia, for his photo, "Near Little Creek Wildlife Area"

Second place: **Zachary Williams**, "Woodland Beach Boat Ramp at Sunset"

Third place: **Sean Griffith** of Lewes, "The Point of Delaware" (Cape Henlopen)

Native Wildlife of Delaware

First place: **Kimberly Barksdale** of Wilmington, "Snowy Egrets Fighting"

Second place: **Bill Corbett** of Wilmington, "Dunlins at Prime Hook"

Third place: **Nancy Hedgespeth** of Dagsboro, "Brown Thrasher Defending the Nest from a Black Rat Snake" (near Trussum Pond)

Agriculture in Delaware

First place: **Zachary Williams**, "Cornfield in Magnolia at Sunset"

Second place: **Joe Hengel**, "Sittin' Pretty" (Argos Corner)

Third place: **Christine Moore** of Lincoln, "Soybean Field in Lincoln"

DNREC's annual Delaware Watersheds Photo Contest portrays the beauty of Delaware's diverse environment while acting as a vivid reminder that everything happening on land within the state's watersheds also directly affects what happens in our waterways and to our wildlife. The contest was open to all photographers, with images from any of Delaware's watersheds accepted as entries. Judges were looking for striking photographic images of Delaware's landscapes, waterscapes, agriculture, and native wildlife. To see the winners and finalists, visit delawarewatersheds.org/2019-delaware-watersheds-photo-contest/.

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